

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks.

By the foregoing amendment, claims 1, 4, 5, 6, 10, 13, 14, and 15 have been amended, and claims 2 and 11 canceled without prejudice or disclaimer and have been incorporated in their entirety into claims 1 and 10, respectively. No new matter has been added. The claims have been amended for further clarity. The amendment to the specification has support at least in figure 5 and pages 5-6 of the specification. Thus, claims 1, 3-10, and 12-15 are currently pending in the application and subject to examination.

Claims 1, 3, 10, and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,077,733 to Whipple ("Whipple") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,697,906 to Ayukawa et al. ("Ayukawa") and claim 17 as being unpatentable over Whipple in view of Ayukawa in further view of U.S. Patent No. 5,684,505 to Takita et al. ("Takita"). It is noted that claims 2 and 11 have been canceled, and claims 1, 5, 10 and 14 have been amended. To the extent that the rejections remain applicable to the claims currently pending, the Applicant hereby traverses the rejections for the following reasons.

The Examiner indicated that claims 2 and 11 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Claims 1 and 10 have been amended to include all of the features of claims 2 and 11, respectively. Therefore, the Applicants submit that claims 1 and 10 are allowable at least for including the allowable subject matter of claims 2 and 11,

respectively. Claims 3-9 depend from claim 1 and claims 12-17 depend from claim 10.

It is respectfully submitted that these dependent claims be deemed allowable for at least the same reasons claims 1 and 10 are allowable, as well as for the additional subject matter recited therein.

CONCLUSION

For all of the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the claims now pending distinguish the present invention from the cited references. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections and an issuance of a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner determine that any further action is necessary to place this application into better form, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned representative at the number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants hereby petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fee for this extension may be charged to our Deposit Account No. 01-2300. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fee deficiency or credit any overpayment associated with this communication to Deposit Account No. 01-2300 with reference to Attorney Docket No. 100353-00180.

Respectfully submitted,

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